

6. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & MAINTENANCE

The BCHMP will be implemented through establishment of a revised planning committee, development of a plan maintenance and review process, and implementation of the individual action items.

6.1 Plan Oversight and Management

6.1.1 Roles & Responsibilities

The BCHMP addresses the hazard mitigation needs of multiple municipalities within Benton County. Accordingly, there are numerous County and City governing councils and agencies that have roles and responsibilities in developing, maintaining, and implementing the BCHMP. These roles and responsibilities are summarized below.

Benton County Emergency Services (BCES)

BCES is the agency tasked by the municipalities of Benton County with providing and/or coordinating various emergency response services. BCES is also the agency tasked with supporting the BCHMP for all the municipalities. BCES' supporting roles include:

1. **Steering Committee:** The BCES Executive Board sits as the BCHMP Steering Committee. Their role is to provide oversight of the development and maintenance of the BCHMP, provide direction to the BCES Director and staff in their support roles, and serves as an executive-level liaison with the governing councils of the municipalities and/or state and federal agencies. Upon adoption of the BCHMP by the municipalities of Benton County, the Steering Committee will facilitate acceptance of the plan by the State and FEMA. The Steering Committee includes a representative of each of the municipalities.
2. **BCES Director:** The BCES Director (or designee) will serve as the *convener* to facilitate the Committee meetings, and will assign tasks such as updating and presenting the plan to the members of the Planning Committee and or BCES staff.
3. **BCES Staff:** The BCES Staff will provide technical and administrative support to the Planning Committee.

Municipalities of Benton County

The municipalities of Benton County (e.g., the governing councils for each municipality), consisting of the cities of Benton City, Kennewick, Prosser, Richland, and West Richland, as well as Benton County itself, have the authority to adopt the BCHMP as their Hazard Mitigation Plan, and to direct the implementation of the action items adopted by them for their municipality. The Plan and any revisions will be referred by the Steering Committee to the municipalities of Benton County for approval. The municipalities are directly responsible for plan implementation.

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee is responsible for coordinating implementation of action items and undertaking the formal plan review process. After plan approval, the Planning Committee will oversee and coordinate implementation, modification, and maintenance of the Plan.

Plan implementation, evaluation, and coordination will be a shared responsibility among all of the members of the Planning Committee, supported by BCES, with oversight provided by the Steering Committee.

The Planning Committee will meet at least annually, and may meet more frequently at their discretion. Meeting dates will be scheduled once the Planning Committee has been re-established (see below). These meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss the progress of the action items and maintain the partnerships that are essential for maximizing the effectiveness and sustainability of the hazard mitigation plan.

Future meetings of the Planning Committee will be used to review progress of the plan in mitigating against the priority hazards (e.g., floods, wildfires, and windstorms), evaluate the need for formal updates and revisions to the plan, and evaluate and develop risk analyses of other hazards as appropriate. The Planning Committee will also meet following a hazard event to review “lessons learned,” evaluate the effectiveness of applied mitigation measures, and identify any additional mitigation measures needed. The BCES Director (or designee) will convene a special meeting following a hazard event as necessary.

Public and Other Stakeholders

The public and other interested stakeholders have significant roles to play in the implementation and maintenance of the BCHMP. Public involvement and input into ongoing mitigation planning efforts – including hazard identification, characterization, and risk assessments – is considered critical to the successful accomplishment of hazard mitigation planning in Benton County.

Public involvement in the development and implementation of action items is also a key element. Members of the general public and interested stakeholders will be encouraged to participate at multiple steps within the ongoing planning and hazard mitigation process. A program to ensure continued public involvement is described below.

6.1.2 Establishment of New Planning Committee

The initial Planning Committee was established by the Steering Committee to initiate the hazard mitigation planning process for the municipalities of Benton County. This has been accomplished. The Planning Committee’s role now becomes that of coordinating implementation of plan action items and undertaking the formal plan review process. Planning Committee membership will be revised as necessary by the Steering Committee (in coordination with the municipalities of Benton County) to assure adequate representation of the involved municipalities and other stakeholders.

The new Planning Committee will be composed of approximately twelve members, or as otherwise determined by the Steering Committee in coordination with the municipalities of Benton County. The Board of County Commissioners and various City Councils will each assign two representatives to serve on the new Planning Committee from each of the municipalities and the County. Representatives assigned by the Board of County Commissioners and various City Councils could include, but are not limited to, the current Planning subcommittee members overseeing development of the Plan, members of City and County agencies, or other stakeholders and members of the public. At least one of the representatives selected by each municipality must be from a municipal department with a key role in hazard mitigation for that municipality.

Assignment to the Planning Committee will be for terms of five years, allowing Planning Committee members to see the BCHMP through at least one complete cycle of implementation, review and update, and adoption.

6.2 Plan Adoption

Once the Planning Committee has reviewed the final draft of the BCHMP, it will be forwarded to the municipalities for their review and adoption. Each municipality will ensure that proper process is followed according to the laws or rules of their organization including adequate public notice. In order to be eligible for Hazard Mitigation Grant funding, the BCHMP must be adopted by each of the participating municipalities. The BCHMP must be officially adopted by the Benton County Commission, and by the City Councils of Benton City, Kennewick, Prosser, Richland¹, and West Richland. Specifically, each municipality must adopt Section 1 of the BCHMP and that Section setting forth their municipality's specific Hazard Mitigation Action Plan, as shown in Table 6.2-1.

TABLE 6.2-1. BENTON COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN ADOPTION MATRIX						
Plan Element	Benton City	City of Kennewick	City of Prosser	City of Richland	City of West Richland	Benton County
Section 1	X	X	X	X	X	X
Section 2	X					
Section 3		X				
Section 4			X			
Section 5				X		
Section 6					X	
Section 7						X

Once the BCHMP has been adopted by the municipalities, it must be approved by the Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division (EMD) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The BCHMP is sent first to the EMD, which must take action within 30 days. The Steering Committee is responsible for submitting the Plan to the EMD. Assuming EMD acceptance of the BCHMP, the EMD forwards the plan to FEMA, who has 60 days to review the Plan. The BCHMP becomes finalized upon approval by both EMD and FEMA.

When the Plan is submitted to EMD and FEMA, those agencies may request some revisions. If there are requests for revisions, the Steering Committee will address those revisions as follows:

1. **Minor Editorial Revisions.** Minor revisions are editorial in nature or reflect minor modifications to background material. Minor revisions will be made by BCES staff.
2. **General Technical Revisions.** General technical revisions are those that alter the technical content of the general plan, either adding/deleting data or modifying the evaluations and processes used to develop risk assessments. General technical revisions

¹ The City of Richland has developed and adopted its own Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, providing direction for mitigation of natural hazards within the City's boundaries. Richland's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan is incorporated herein by reference.

will be made by BCES staff, and the changes reviewed and approved by the Planning Committee. Major technical changes could also require review by the Steering Committee and if applicable, any affected municipalities.

3. **Substantive Changes to the General Plan or Mitigation Action Items.** Any substantive changes to either the general plan (Section 1) or mitigation action items (Sections 2 – 7) are the responsibility of the Planning Committee, assisted by BCES staff.. Substantive changes to the general plan elements would also require review and approval by the Steering Committee. Substantive changes to the mitigation action items would require review and approval by the affected municipalities, and could require re-adoption of the Plan depending on the complexity and scope of the revisions.

6.3 Plan Maintenance and Review

The Plan will be formally revised, as needed, and adopted by the municipalities of Benton County at least once every five years as required. At the determination of the Steering Committee, updates of the plan may be developed with greater frequency and, upon adoption by the municipalities, submitted to the State Hazard Mitigation Officer and FEMA for review and approval.

6.3.1 Annual Plan Review

The BCHMP will be evaluated on an annual basis to determine the effectiveness of mitigation measures and action items, and to reflect changes in land development, programs, or the risks posed by hazards that may affect mitigation priorities. The evaluation process will include a firm schedule and timeline, and identify the local agencies and organizations participating in plan evaluation. The BCES Director (or designee) will be responsible for contacting the Planning Committee members and organizing the annual review process.

Planning Committee members will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the progress of their municipal mitigation strategies in the Plan. The Committee will review:

- Ongoing implementation of mitigation action items, e.g., actions that have been taken to obtain funding, permits, approvals, or other resources to implement an item.
- Coordination of multi-jurisdictional mitigation action items between municipalities.
- Public involvement activities.
- BCHMP goals and objectives to determine their relevance to changing situations in the municipalities of Benton County, as well as changes in State or Federal policy, and to ensure they are addressing current and expected conditions.
- Hazard risk assessments and priorities to determine if this information should be updated or modified, given any new available data.
- Modifications to mitigation action items, either adding new ones or deleting approved items, and information that justifies the modification.

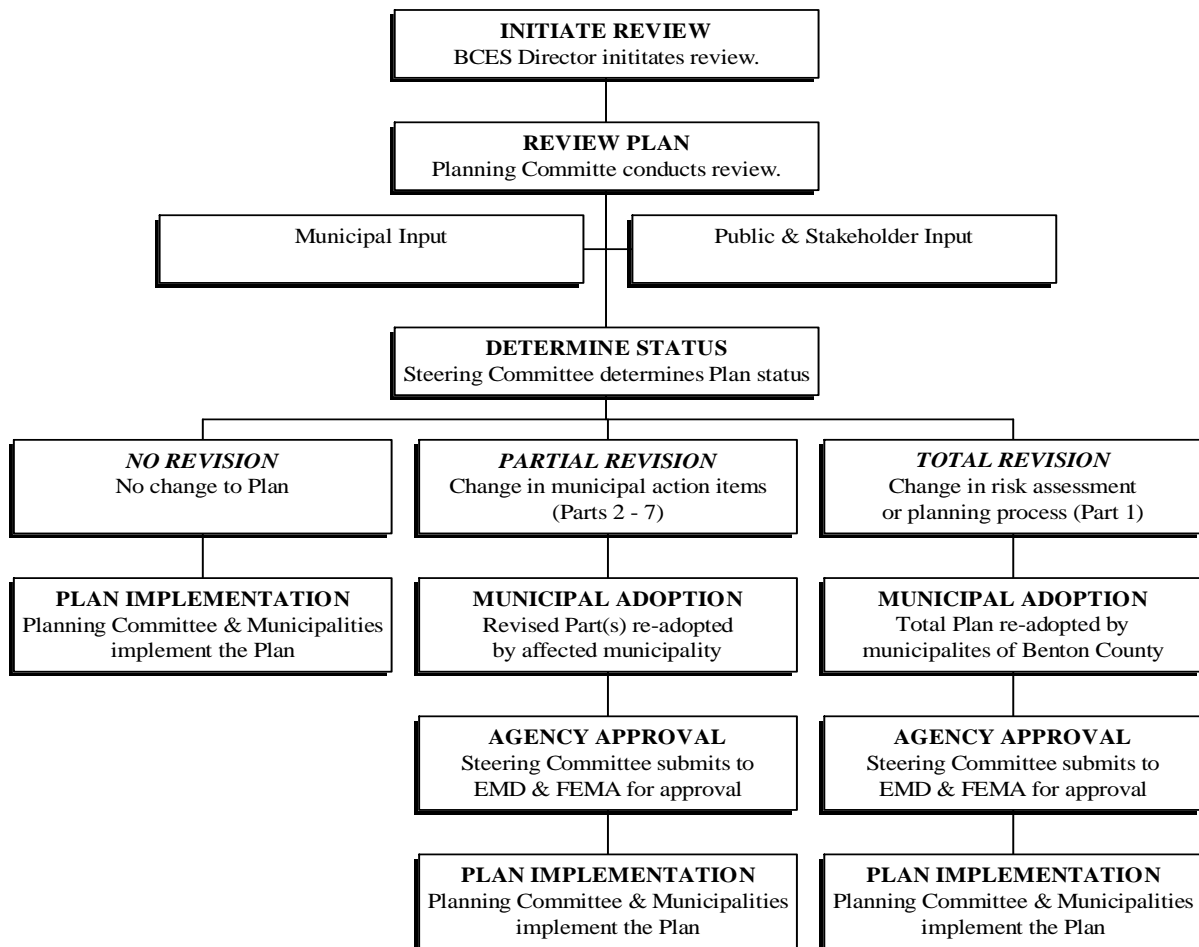
The Planning Committee will report the results of the annual review to the Steering Committee, along with recommendations for revisions, if any.

The annual plan review will also serve to complete the BCHMP. The current plan focuses on three priority natural hazards. Future iterations of the plan will address the complete set of natural and technological hazards applicable to Benton County. At the direction of the Steering Committee, the Planning Committee will undertake to complete the hazard characterizations and risk analyses necessary to support additional hazard mitigation action planning.

The Steering Committee will review the results of the Planning Committee's annual review. At this point, the process will take one of three directions. The process is shown below in Figure 6.3-1.

- (1) The Steering Committee may determine that the Plan is adequate as written, with *no revisions* required. Implementation of the Plan would continue until the next annual review.
- (2) The Committee may decide a *partial revision* is necessary; e.g., based on input from the municipalities or other stakeholders, that one or more of the municipal-specific sections (Sections 2 – 7) should be revised. For example, if one municipality wishes to insert additional action items, their specific Hazard Mitigation Action Plan would be revised. This would require the revised Section be re-adopted by the affected municipality, and the revised Section be re-submitted to the State and Federal agencies for approval. Implementation of the remainder of the Plan would continue.
- (3) The Committee may determine that a *total revision* is required. For example, if a change to Part 1 is necessary to reflect changing conditions in Benton County, State and Federal policy, or the hazard characterizations. Such a change would require a complete re-adoption of the Plan by all the municipalities of Benton County. Following adoption by the municipalities of Benton County, the updated plan will be submitted to the State Hazard Mitigation Officer and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for review. The approved Plan would then be implemented.

Figure 6.3-1. BCHMP Review Process



6.3.2 Review Following a Hazard Event

Within 60 days following a major hazard event affecting all or a part of Benton County, the BCES Director will arrange a meeting of the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee will meet to review any “lessons learned” from the hazard event for the continuing development of the Plan. The Committee will evaluate direct and indirect damage as well as response and recovery costs. The goal of the review is to identify whether any new mitigation action items are warranted to avoid similar losses from future hazard events, or to identify whether existing mitigation action items should be re-prioritized. Depending on the effects of the hazard event and the determinations of the Planning Committee, the information will be used to immediately revise the Plan or be considered during the next annual Plan review.

The meeting will be open to members the public, and will be advertised in accordance with the rules of each of the affected municipalities to ensure adequate public notice.

6.4 Continued Public Involvement

The municipalities of Benton County are dedicated to continuing to educate the public about hazard mitigation planning. They are also committed to involving the public in the annual review and updates of the Hazard Mitigation Plan, in addition to their involvement with reviewing, planning, and implementing specific action items and mitigation measures. It will be important that hazard mitigation becomes integrated into existing programs and becomes part of the way the municipalities make decisions about land use and facilities planning. The Planning Committee is responsible for the annual review and update of the plan.

The public will be encouraged to provide feedback about the BCHMP. Copies of the BCHMP will be catalogued and kept at all of the appropriate agencies in the County and Cities. The existence and location of these copies will be publicized in the various County, City, and community newsletters. The plan also includes the address and the phone number of the County BCES Director (or designee), responsible for keeping track of public comments on the Plan.

Public comments should be submitted to:

Benton County Emergency Services, Director
Re: Benton County Hazard Mitigation Plan
651 Truman Avenue
Richland, WA 99352
(509) 628-2600

Further, copies of the BCHMP and any proposed changes will be posted on the BCES website. This site will also contain an email address and phone number to which people can direct their comments and concerns.

A public meeting will be held during each annual plan evaluation or when deemed necessary by the Planning Committee. The meetings will provide the public a forum for which they can express their concerns, opinions, or ideas about the Plan. The BCES Public Information Officer will be responsible for using available County and city resources to publicize the annual public meeting and maintain public involvement through the government access channel, web page, and newspapers. Ongoing efforts to solicit the public's input, as well as focus groups, meetings with stakeholders, public education/information campaigns, utility bill flyers, public notices and presentations will also be utilized for involving the public as future elements of the plan are developed and mitigation action priorities are implemented.

6.5 Plan Implementation

The BCHMP will be an effective tool to mitigate the effects of natural and technological hazards only if the selected action items are implemented. Some of the action items can likely be implemented through existing programs. Other action items will require new programs and/or significant changes to existing programs and infrastructure. Benefit/cost analyses or other tools may be used to determine the feasibility and priority of some of the desired action items. Many of the action items will require a significant commitment of resources and/or funding in order to be viable. Implementing these action items will be dependent upon the availability of external funding.

6.5.1 Action Items

There are few, if any, practical measures available to Benton County to reduce or limit the occurrence of most of the potential natural hazards and many of the technological hazards. Therefore, this Plan has focused its development of mitigation actions on reducing or eliminating the exposure and/or vulnerability of population, property, infrastructure, and environment to the hazards.

This Plan has identified action items to address the stated hazard mitigation goals and objectives through reducing exposure and/or vulnerability to the hazards. These action items generally fall into the following categories:

Reducing exposure to the hazard:

- Removing existing development within the area of hazard.
- Restricting future development within the area of hazard.

Reducing vulnerability to the hazard:

- Providing a structural defense against the impacts of the hazard.
- Providing a nonstructural defense against the impacts of the hazard.
- Providing hazard mitigation education to the affected communities.
- Ensuring that plans, procedures, facilities, equipment, and trained personnel are available to provide for adequate response and recovery.

Action items are specified for each priority hazard. Several action items, addressing natural hazard mitigation planning, public awareness and other mitigation measures, are applicable to multiple hazards – these are typically given a higher priority within the Plan. In addition, some action items are “common” to multiple jurisdictions. These multi-jurisdictional action items were typically given higher priorities as well, as the municipalities recognize the advantages in a united effort.

Action items that have been adopted by specific municipalities and are therefore subject to implementation are described in each municipality’s action plan (Sections 2 – 7). Each municipality is responsible for addressing and implementing their own specific action items. Where action items involve more than one municipality, or are common to more than one municipality, the members of the Planning Committee will coordinate the implementation of the action items between their respective municipalities. BCES will support the coordination effort.

6.5.2 Existing Programs

Benton County addresses statewide planning goals and legislative requirements through its Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Capital Improvement Plans, and Municipal Codes (including zoning regulations, building codes, etc.). The cities, including Benton City, Kennewick, Prosser, Richland, and West Richland, have also developed their own Comprehensive Land Use Plans, Capital Improvement Plans, and/or Municipal Codes. The BCHMP provides a series of action items to mitigate the effects of specific hazards. Several of the action items are closely related to the goals and objectives of existing planning programs for the municipalities of Benton County. Some of these recommended mitigation action items can be implemented through existing programs and planning efforts.

Comprehensive Land Use/Community Plans

Upon adoption of the BCHMP, the municipalities of Benton County will evaluate identified action items that could require revision of their respective Comprehensive Land Use and/or Community Plans and critical areas ordinances. An example would be implementing an action item to restrict future development in areas of known hazards through planning strategies adopted through the normal municipal planning processes. The municipalities shall incorporate information on hazards into future comprehensive plans and limit the intensity of development (or otherwise take action to mitigate the hazard) relative to the degree to which the hazard occurs within the areas of proposed development.

In this regard, the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) has a publication titled, *Optional Comprehensive Plan Elements for Natural Hazard Reduction* (CTED, 1999) that provides guidance for integrating hazard mitigation planning within the existing Growth Management Act (GMA) framework (WAC 365-195). Further, it can serve as guidance for incorporating hazard reduction goals into local planning efforts. This guidance will be used by Benton County municipalities in their review of existing plans and for ensuring consistency between the BCHMP and existing comprehensive and capital facility plans, and resource land and critical areas ordinances.

Required seven year comprehensive plan reviews under GMA [RCW 36.70A.130 (1)(a)(4)(c)] also include requirements for public notification and involvement. These public processes will be used by the municipalities of Benton County as opportunities for engaging the public in discussions that are directly relevant to hazard mitigation planning, as well as, being opportunities for coordination and collaboration between agencies.

Municipal Codes

Several of the municipalities have agencies responsible for administering the zoning regulations and building codes in their community. Depending on the action items, these agencies shall

1. Ensure that the municipal codes incorporate specific action items (as required).
2. Ensure that the municipal codes are compatible with the BCHMP goals and objectives.

3. Work with the State Building Code Office to make sure that the municipalities adopt and are enforcing, the minimum standards established in the New State Building Code.

In addition and as required by the mitigation action items, the Planning Committee shall work with other agencies at the state level to review, develop zoning regulations, building codes, and other municipal codes that are adequate to mitigate or prevent damage by natural hazards. This would ensure that life-safety criteria are met for new construction.

Capital Facilities Plans

The goals and action items in the BCHMP may be achieved through activities recommended in the municipalities Capital Facilities Plans or Capital Improvement Plans. Various City and County departments develop these capital project plans, and review them on an annual basis. The Planning Committee will work with their respective municipality's departments during the normal capital planning process to identify areas where the mitigation action items are consistent with capital planning goals. The mitigation action items shall be integrated into the capital planning process where appropriate.

Operating Budgets

The Planning Committee and the municipalities shall incorporate the mitigation action items into each municipality's annual budget process. Funding for the mitigation action items will be either internal resources, external resources, or combined resources as defined below.

- **Internal Resources** – Internal resources are developed through the normal municipal budget process, either through the lead agency's operating budget, capital facilities budget, lump sum appropriation, bond issue, or whatever mechanism best suits the needs of the municipality.
- **External Resources** – External resources are basically federal, state, or private grant monies. Sources for such external resources include FEMA grants (Hazard Mitigation Grants Program, Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program, Fire Prevention and Safety Grants, Equipment Acquisition Grants, etc.), Department of Homeland Security grants through the Office of Domestic Preparedness or Emergency Preparedness and Response, state grants, and other sources.
- **Combined Resources** – Combined resources include project funding from both internal and external sources, or resources from multiple municipalities or agencies.

Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

BCES maintains a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan that encompasses all of the municipalities of Benton County. BCES will review the BCHMP mitigation action items for all the municipalities, and incorporate applicable action items and other elements of the BCHMP into the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan as appropriate.

Within one year of formal adoption of the mitigation plan, the recommendations for implementation listed above will be incorporated as warranted into the process of existing planning mechanisms at the County and City levels. The meetings of the Planning Committee will provide an opportunity for Committee members to report back on the progress made on the

integration of mitigation planning elements into City and County planning documents and procedures.

6.5.3 Economic Analysis of Mitigation Projects

FEMA's approaches to identify the costs and benefits associated with natural hazard mitigation strategies, measures, or projects fall into two general categories: benefit/cost analysis and cost-effectiveness analysis. Conducting benefit/cost analysis for a mitigation activity can assist communities in determining whether a project is worth undertaking now, in order to avoid disaster-related damages later. Cost-effectiveness analysis evaluates how best to spend a given amount of money to achieve a specific goal. Determining the economic feasibility of mitigating natural hazards can provide decision-makers with an understanding of the potential benefits and costs of an activity, as well as a basis upon which to compare alternative projects.

Given federal funding, the Planning Committee and/or the municipalities of Benton County will apply a FEMA-approved benefit/cost analysis approach to identify and prioritize mitigation action items. For other projects and funding sources, the Planning Committee and/or the municipalities of Benton County may use other approaches to understand the costs and benefits of each action item and develop a prioritized list. For more information regarding economic analysis of mitigation action items, see Appendix D of the Plan.